

# Martha Ellen Black's MRC testimony

Comments to the Mississippi River Commission: General Riley, Members of the Mississippi River Commission, Colonel Sherer

My name is Martha Ellen Black and I am the Executive Director of Susanna Wesley Family Learning Center and the Director of the East Prairie Enterprise Community Project. I am here to speak to you in favor of the St. Johns Bayou-New Madrid Floodway flood control project.

Most of the work we do is social in nature and flood control is a little out of our field of expertise, excepting the fact that flooding is a pervasive dictator of our residents' ability to live a normal life.

Therefore, we have filed a "Motion to Intervene as Respondents" at the June 3, 2003 Water Quality Certification Hearing.

We hope to educate the hearing officer and the Clean Water Commis-

sion about the negative impact of backwater flooding

Prior to East Prairie's 1994 designation as an Enterprise Community, the residents of our town came together and held a series of meetings to determine our strengths and weaknesses and possible solutions to our problems.

One recurring problem that emerged was flooding and the devastating effect flooding has on people's lives, their property, and livelihood.

The solution that came out of the meetings was the completion of the St. Johns Bayou-New Madrid Floodway flood control project. That is why I am here today.

Since that time we have been hit again and again by one roadblock or another from the environmental community.

We feel that most of their objec-

tions to this project are based on misconceptions or downright misrepresentations.

First, the environmental community said we wanted to drain wetlands. That is not the case. Most of the land here is classified as prior converted wetlands - and rightly so. They have been drained and farmed for generations.

The purpose of this project is not drainage, but flood control. The purpose is to keep people and property from flooding. It is imperative that we are finally allowed to get this project underway once again.

We greatly appreciate all that the Corps of Engineers has done to make this flood control project a reality. It has been a long time in coming, and it needs to be completed.

Thank you for letting me speak before you today.



**Dr. Martha Ellen Black addressing the Mississippi River Commission Monday in support of the St. Johns project.**